

HAYS DAILY NEWS

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DAILY 12.55

THURSDAY

JAN 7 1993

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EDITOR'S OPINION

How to murder your wife and friends

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EDITOR

It's a perfect plot for a mystery novel, thousands of murders every year and no one caught and punished for them.

Unfortunately, it's no mystery thriller. It's truth.

Thousands of murderers do go unpunished every year. Their victims are family members, friends and co-workers.

Their weapon is a cigarette. Lots of cigarettes to be precise.

A new report from the Environmental Protection Agency concludes that secondhand cigarette smoke causes about 3,000 lung cancer deaths each year among non-smokers.

Those 3,000 people a year are murdered by smokers.

Oh, sure, we don't call it murder. The smokers don't intend to kill their friends and families after all. But they do keep on smoking, knowing that cigarette smoke is deadly to themselves and to others.

The EPA report released this week concludes that secondhand cigarette smoke is a deadly carcinogen, in the same category

with asbestos, radon and benzene.

In addition to the 3,000 deaths from lung cancer, the EPA found that secondhand smoke increases the risk of other diseases — bronchitis, pneumonia and ear infections in children.

The EPA did not release a second report on secondhand smoke. That report, which the EPA has been holding for several years even though it was leaked to news media, linked secondhand smoke to 37,000 heart disease deaths each year.

The report should cause smokers and their families and friends new concern. It should make smokers quit. It should make non-smokers more militant in their refusal to tolerate other people's smoking around them.

By now, it's obvious that people who are still smoking don't care enough about what they are doing to their own health to stop. Quitting is tough and painful for smokers, but it cannot be as painful as the guilt of knowing they caused the death of a dear friend or loved one.

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